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Suggested Statement on Soviet Presence in Cuba

There has been no substantial buildup of Soviet military equipment or military forces in Cuba since the "quarantine" of late October 1962. The USSR had supplied a great deal of military equipment to Cuba prior to July 1962, including about 200 tanks, around 1,500 artillery pieces, 35 MIG 15 and 17 jet aircraft and many conventional anti-aircraft guns. In mid-1962 there were about 500 Soviet military technicians in Cuba advising and training the Cuban armed forces, then estimated at 75,000 regulars and about 100,000 reserves.

In July 1962 began the massive influx of Soviet military equipment and military personnel which was detected by our intelligence community and monitored into the September/October crisis period when the offensive nuclear weapon systems (missiles and bombers) appeared in the shipments. These offensive missiles and bombers, which directly threatened the United States and other American states, were withdrawn after the American announcement of their presence in late October.

Nevertheless, during the period July to October 24th, the date of establishing the quarantine, substantial additional quantities of military equipment other than offensive missiles and bombers

White House
MORI/CDF Pages 1, 2, 3 and
5

were delivered to Cuba. Thus we now know the number of tanks and field pieces in Cuba have doubled. The inventory of MIG aircraft is now 106, including 42 of the advanced MIG-21 types. Moreover, major new weapons were introduced, such as the 24 ground-to-air missile installations with their radar control, 4 coastal defense missile systems, 12 KOMAR missile-carrying coastal defense boats and a number of self-propelled mobile field pieces. Therefore it can be concluded the totality of Soviet equipment in Cuba greatly increased in the period from July to October.

During this same period Soviet military personnel poured in, reaching a total of about 22,000 by late October. The personnel associated with the offensive weapons were withdrawn when those weapons returned to the USSR. There are now an estimated 17,000 Soviet military personnel in Cuba, all or nearly all there in late October. Most of the new equipment delivered to Cuba this summer is in the hands of Soviet personnel.

After the "quarantine" ended and the offensive weapons withdrawn, many Soviet ships have come to Cuban ports. The U.S. intelligence agencies have closely observed this shipping and can confidently say that only one ship carrying any significant amount of military cargo has arrived in Cuba since late October.

This ship, the SIMFEROPOL, arrived on January 17. Its cargo included military equipment, but it did not include objects with the proportions of an offensive aircraft or missile.

Thus, although there are now still large quantities of Soviet tanks, guns, aircraft and military personnel in Cuba, which is a matter of grave concern, there has been no appreciable increase of either Soviet military equipment or personnel in Cuba since late October 1962.

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[redacted] says this was handcarried to the
White House and released as a Press
Statement by Salinger.